

Welcome Remarks by Mr. Lim Sang-Beom
Director-General for Nonproliferation and Nuclear Affairs
at the IPNDV Working Group Meeting
10 July 2018, Seoul

Ladies and gentlemen,

Welcome to Seoul and thank you for coming all the way. It is my great pleasure to see all of you, verification experts, gathering in Seoul. I also thank the Department of State and Nuclear Threat Initiative for all the efforts made for this working group meeting.

I remember the meeting at the US Mission in New York in 2015 in the margin of the NPT Review Conference to discuss the launch of International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification (IPNDV). Since then, I have been apart from the disarmament circle for last few years. Today, I am very pleased to see the progress of the discussion that day.

As the 2020 NPT Review cycle goes on, to some extent, pessimism seems to prevail. In general, the conditions for the successful Review Conference are not so favorable. Recently we hear more frequently about the deteriorating security environment and strategic instability and about the rising risk of misperception and miscalculation. The situation in the Middle East has not improved, the future of New START is uncertain. States Parties to the NPT are divided over disarmament and regional issues.

However we cannot afford to sit down and simply wait until things start looking up, because they will never be, without our common efforts to find breakthroughs. Given the current atmosphere even small but concrete breakthroughs can make a difference and that is where I find the value and strength of IPNDV.

Article VI of NPT notes that future disarmament shall be conducted under strict and effective international control, for which verification is a key. Article VI also implies that the disarmament is not a sole responsibility of nuclear weapon states but a co-work of both nuclear weapon states and non-nuclear weapon states.

In this regard, we consider multilateral verification of nuclear weapons dismantlement is a process which, if we tackle with common wisdom, can make progress in building greater confidence among states with diverging views.

During the Phase I, we concluded that it is possible for states with and without nuclear weapons to work together in the verification process. The way ahead is to translate these possibilities into concrete steps. In this light, my government firmly supports the work of IPNDV. I am also confident that deliverables of the Phase II will become invaluable contributions to the 2020 Review Conference.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am sure that the three-day meeting will bear a fruitful outcome. At the same time cultural experience is unforgettable elements of mutual understanding. I hope you find time to look around the city. Seoul has been a political and economic center of this country for more than six centuries. If you walk out from the hotel, you will see our national treasure, Dongdaemun (the East Gate). Dongdaemun is one of four main gates entering the City, of which only two are preserved until today. Also you can easily get to royal palaces, national museum or galleries by public transportation. Please enjoy your staying in Seoul.

To conclude with, I wish you all the success. Thank you. /END/